



Matthew Gowans, President  
Jed Rasmussen, Vice-President  
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

## Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

[Zoom Meeting ID: 824 1109 2322, Passcode: 180732](#)

### I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- A. **Senators Present:** Andrew Bahlmann, Sandra Cox, Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Matthew Gowans (Pres), Wes Jamison, Jed Rasmussen (VP), Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser (sub for J. Wallace)
  
- B. **Senators Absent:** A. Burningham, David Fullmer, Karen Carter, Jeff Wallace
  
- C. **Guests:** Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), David Allred (Deans), Melanie Jenkins (Provost), Kade Parry (Asst. Provost), Nicole Taylor

### II. Informational Items

#### A. President's Updates (M. Gowans)

M. Gowans reminded the Senate to send him any good news from divisions or committees that could be reported in the regular college newsletter. Both he and Heidi Johnson, Faculty Association President, collaborate on the faculty section of this document. The newsletter helps campus stakeholders be aware of what contributions the faculty are making to the institution.

M. Gowans thanked Provost Jenkins and the Deans Council for providing a course release for the Faculty Senate President, derived from ongoing funds for institutional service that will need to be reapplied for every year. He also noted that other faculty leaders on campus can apply for similar course releases, especially in the semesters where committee or other institutional work has a

heavy load (for instance, if the A&T Committee is dealing with dozens of advancement and tenure applications in a given year). Provost Jenkins seconded this, and noted that Academic Affairs will ask for applications for these releases in due time.

M. Gowans also thanked Provost Jenkins for the *Understanding Academic Freedom* book, which was ordered for the Senate. The book helps faculty better understand what the term means, defining its importance and also reviewing its limitations. He has asked that each division receive two copies; these would be “Senate-owned” and passed from senator to senator after transitions. He indicated that the Senate may cover some highlights from the book in future meetings this semester.

## **B. Upcoming Senate and Senate-Administered Elections (J. Thomas)**

The following Senators are up for reelection this semester. These elections should occur in the respective divisions by the February 14th division meeting before the Fall schedule is put into effect so that all Senators can be assured that they will not teach during Senate meeting time.

**Science & Math:** Jed Rasmussen eligible for reelection

**Business & Tech:** Karen Carter not eligible for reelection\*

**Fine Arts & Comm:** David Fullmer eligible for full-term election

**Adjuncts:** Adam Burningham eligible for reelection this Fall

Senate President & Vice-President will also be elected in due course

K. Carter recently switched from professional to tenure track, and is thus considered “non-tenured.” This prevents her from serving another term for her division.

M. Gowans and J. Thomas will contact the respective Deans soon, as well as any interested adjunct faculty.

## **C. Search Committee for New Snow College President (M. Gowans)**

M. Gowans indicated that forums for the search for a new Snow College President (on which he serves) will be held on January 23, 24, and 30. The

purpose of these forums is for the search committee to solicit ideas about what institutional stakeholders are looking for in a college president, which will help guide how the committee formulates the job posting.

February 1 is the anticipated date for the job posting, which will remain open until mid-March. After the application period closes, the committee will decide who to interview, and these interviews will be held at the end of March. The committee will then recommend 3-5 candidates to the Board of Trustees, which makes the ultimate decision. Further public forums will be held for stakeholders to ask questions of the candidates. The goal is to have a new president announced by late May or early June.

M. Gowans encouraged senators to ask division members what they'd like to see in a future college president, and to forward these suggestions on to him as a search committee member. This feedback will be added to an ongoing shared Google Doc which will be referenced by the committee.

#### **D. Department Chair & Deans Selection Document Update (M. Gowans)**

*\*The document referred to in this section is included as an addendum to the minutes.*

Former Provost Steve Hood created a policy several years ago for the selection of Department Chairs. In essence, the document indicates that chairs are selected by division Deans, who should “seek recommendations and opinions of department faculty.” Some controversy was recently generated in one particular department in the process of selecting a new chair. Because the previous dean did not rely on the document as written in past chair selections, many of the department’s faculty were taken aback by both the policy and the procedure (of which they were unaware). The subsequent conversation has spurred some faculty to call on the Senate, Deans, and Academic Affairs to address the concerns with the current policy and enter dialogue as to what such a policy could look like.

M. Gowans previously talked to both D. Allred and M. Brenchley—who rotate attending Senate meetings on behalf of the Deans Council—about the selection document, and requested on behalf of the faculty that the document be revised

and updated by the Deans Council, and that discrepancies that exist within the document be corrected. He emphasized four points particularly:

- (1) That Provost/Deans take the time to revise the document.
- (2) That in the revision of the document, the faculty have significant input, particularly from the Senate or a committee of department chairs.
- (3) That the policy goes through the normal review process and is ratified by the College Council.
- (4) That the policy is publicly posted and that all divisions apply and enforce it equally.

This subject generated significant discussion among meeting attendees. The following emerged from among the points raised.

First, that departments vary significantly across campus in numbers, and the needs of one department will be different from another. (For instance, the English & Philosophy Department has some 20 full-time faculty, while the Geology Department only has 2). Thus any policy dealing with the selection of department chairs must accommodate this reality.

Second, in answer to a clarifying question put forward by A. Bahlmann, Provost Jenkins indicated that deans and department chairs are “one hundred percent of the time” functioning in administrative roles, answering directly to the Office of Academic Affairs. Furthermore, she also indicated her preference that the selection of department chairs come from a more formalized application process, and not from a question of “whose turn it is” or even a departmental vote. She feels that department chairs who have been appointed after applying for the role have a greater sense of accountability.

Third, both Provost Jenkins and D. Allred affirmed that Academic Affairs and the Deans Council will look at these concerns and revise the document with significant faculty input.

J. Rasmussen concluded the discussion by encouraging senators to be aware of the policies in place and to help facilitate communication between administration and the faculty in these matters.

## **E. ChatGPT & AI-Generated Essays Discussion (M. Gowans, J. Thomas)**

J. Thomas presented his unofficial but enlightening (and amusing) experiment with ChatGPT. The basic message of his remarks was that while ChatGPT and other A.I. programs may bring new challenges for education, that there are still ways to prevent and detect cheating, and the college essay is in fact *not* dead.

Senators discussed that some disciplines will be more affected than others; faculty from the sciences were particularly concerned. There was some consensus, recommended by M. Gowans, that the Academic Honesty policy in the student handbook needs to be updated to include a note about AI-generated papers or responses, which Academic Affairs is looking into.

## **III. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

### **A. Review of minutes from November 30, 2022 (attached; J. Thomas)**

### **B. Vote to approve or amend minutes (M. Gowans)**

**Motion to Approve:** W. Jamison; 2nd: D. Schugk

**Approval:** Approval of senators present; 1 abstention (A. Slusser)

## **IV. Senate Initiative Discussions**

### **A. Policy #410 Revision: Advancement & Tenure (A. Bahlmann)**

*\*Policy #410 is the governing document for hiring tenure-track faculty. The committee has recently been working on making accommodations within the policy for faculty who have been awarded tenure at other institutions or previously at Snow College, have taken a leave of employment, and then returned. For more discussions on this policy, refer to the minutes for November 30, 2022.*

A. Bahlmann indicated that there is no update since the last meeting; the A&T Committee will continue to clarify the existing policy rather than redefine the terms.

#### **B. Academic Freedom Procedure Subcommittee (W. Jamison)**

W. Jamison presented the subcommittee's most recent revision of this proposed amendment to Policy #402 regarding faculty corrective action. The revisions clarify that if a student raises a grievance regarding a faculty member's presentation of subject matter, that the normal chain of command is first consulted: Department Chair, followed by the Dean. If the matter has not been settled to the faculty member's satisfaction, they can then request review by the Faculty Senate, which will then make a recommendation to Administration, who will then make the final decision.

Provost Jenkins recommended that identical language be used from Policy 7.2, that the Faculty Senate appoints five full-time faculty to serve on the review committee, one from each division. W. Jamison agreed that he would include this language. He also indicated that he would have the college attorney look over the amendments, which would then be passed on to the College Council followed by the required 30-Day general review period.

It is during this review period, M. Gowans emphasized, that the Faculty Senate should sponsor a lunch bunch on the policy changes and help the faculty understand that the Senate heard their concerns on academic freedom and acted.

#### **C. Curriculum Committee Assistance in Syllabi Renewal (S. Cox)**

During the November 30 meeting, S. Cox had indicated that the Curriculum Committee faced significant challenges in getting faculty to renew master syllabi when they expire after five years. She suggested that some progress had been made by working with department chairs to assign specific faculty members to be accountable for renewing them.

#### **D. Shared Governance Subcommittee (M. Gowans, J. Rasmussen, A. Christensen)**

This subcommittee has been working throughout the past calendar year to better clarify the shared governance structure at Snow College, particularly regarding the relationship between Academic Affairs, Deans Council, the Faculty Senate, and the Faculty Association. M. Gowans indicated that this is still under discussion. D. Allred noted that all of the conversations from last year were “hugely important in shaping [his] understanding” of governance structure, and that having one representative from each body attending the other body’s meetings has proven fruitful. (For the record, D. Allred and M. Brenchley have rotated in attending Senate on behalf of Deans, and J. Rasmussen and M. Gowans have fulfilled the same role attending Deans on behalf of Senate.)

A. Christensen suggested that more formal results and concrete actions need to be implemented. M. Gowans agreed that a document of some kind was needed, and suggested that the subcommittee members meet soon to revisit this item. A. Christensen noted that the document should summarize what was discussed and agreed upon, and that it be posted publicly for ease of reference “so the learning isn’t lost.” D. Allred offered to collaborate on the document as well.

#### **V. Committee Reports**

No pressing committee reports at this time.

#### **VI. Senate Orientation**

Senate goals were not reviewed or discussed in this meeting, but are included below for reference.

1. Improve connection between faculty and staff.
2. Develop a stronger relationship with Senate committees, and empower committees to have a leadership role on campus.
3. Further define the Senate’s role in shared governance.

4. Develop an academic freedom process and procedure and update the existing free speech policy to better protect both faculty and students.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn: A. Bahlmann; 2nd: W. Jamison

Approval: Unanimous of those present

The Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

---

## **VIII. Items to Take Back to Divisions**

- A. Encourage faculty to attend one of the public forums this month meant to solicit feedback on qualifications for the next college president; if any division members have ideas for what qualifications or expectations should be in the job posting, they can pass them on to M. Gowans, who will forward them to the committee chair.
- B. The Senate is getting close to completing a process for hearing academic freedom appeals.
- C. Voice support for Curriculum Committee and syllabi renewal if needed in your division.

## **IX. Next Meeting & Future Items**

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 25, 2023** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.



## **X. Attachments**

Meeting Minutes, November 30, 2022  
Faculty Senate Roster, 2022-2023  
Snow College Policy #402 & Proposed Revisions  
Department Chair & Dean Selection Document  
Chat GPT Results & Analysis by J. Thomas

---

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas  
Minutes approved 1/25/2023